11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

only a crude form of body decoration based on geometrical designs.

They are, therefore, to be included among the most backward peoples of mankind, who have remained in a very simple form of social structure. They have never progressed to any elementary organization of themselves into 'clans', or even 'tribes'. They have, in short, the psychological outlook and concepts of other primitive peoples, modified by local conditions. The evidence in favour of the Onges of today being the product of cultural development over a very long period appears to me overwhelming, though their development has already been hindered by involution and, we must presume, a series of setbacks.

The Onges have thus remained culturally isolated and this has deprived them of the opportunities offered to the rest of the world. The time came when they ceased to receive or to elaborate new concepts, and from that point regression was inevitable. There is abundant evidence that their culture dates back to Palaeolithic times, so that they now represent the last and decadent expression of a very lengthy stage of biological and cultural development, a point of arrival, and not one of departure. Everywhere in the Andamans there are signs of an ancient culture which must once have spread over much of the world. It is neither logical nor practical to explain the similarity of many concepts as a series of convergences, all of independent origin; ideas must have spread outwards with the passage of time and the gradual population of habitable areas.

No study of present-day life on the Andamans can be complete without an attempt to build up a valid picture of the islands as they were centuries ago, and this we can do with some accuracy by a study of the kitchen-middens. These abound on Great Andaman, but few have been excavated, and then only briefly reported. Those of Little Andaman have not, for obvious reasons, previously been investigated, but they are of considerable importance for the light they cast on their own development and history, and on that of similar mounds outside the Andamans. It is only on Little Andaman that they are still being built up, continually increasing in size, forming a unique, direct and continuous link with life on the island thousands of years ago.

Provided they have not been damaged – for example by rain or